

## Sample activities for each area of action for transition

The following examples are grouped into the five areas of action for transition. Note that some activities may address several areas of action; the classification will vary depending on the emphasis during implementation.

### Administrative

Examples of administrative activities within the NSW context include:

- establishing agreement at the principal or deputy principal level across a cluster of primary and secondary schools on the need for a comprehensive, integrated, coordinated transition program within and across these schools
- creating a 'transition team' or working group to develop an integrated transition program across the schools involved. This group could contain school executive, teachers, other school staff, parents or caregivers, and students from the local primary and secondary schools
- holding regular meetings of the transition team, once planning is completed, to resolve problems and suggest improvements during the program's implementation
- arranging for the Year 7 student adviser (and other teachers as required) to visit each primary school to speak with the primary executive and class teachers about proposed transition arrangements
- arranging with each primary school for representatives of the secondary school(s) to speak at events such as primary school parent information nights, P&C meetings and student meetings for Years 5 and 6. Talks could outline the nature of secondary school, the transition activities that will occur and who to contact regarding student or parent enquiries or concerns about any aspect of the transition process
- arranging meetings between primary and secondary school staff about the nature and extent of information (such as academic achievement, social development and special needs) to be provided by the primary schools about individual students
- developing an agreed form to use for transferring student information
- exchanging detailed information between primary and secondary schools about each student
- inviting Year 6 special needs students and their parents to meet with appropriate secondary school staff such as the Year 7 student adviser, school counsellor, Head Teacher Welfare, integration coordinator and STLA. This meeting might occur at either the primary school or the secondary school
- gathering teachers from the secondary school and its feeder primary schools to discuss results of literacy, numeracy and computing skills tests for individual students or groups of students
- setting up a web site in the secondary school, or developing a *Microsoft PowerPoint* presentation, to provide information to incoming students and their parents or caregivers about the nature of secondary schooling and the features and achievements of the school

- creating a generalised 'introduction to secondary school' booklet for primary school students, including a section on frequently asked questions
- arranging for the inclusion of secondary school news articles in primary school newsletters
- organising the distribution of copies of the secondary school newsletter to students in Years 5 and 6.

## **Social and personal**

Examples of social and personal activities within the NSW context include:

- conducting Year 6 orientation tours of the secondary school to help familiarise incoming students with the organisation and layout of the secondary school
- inviting incoming students and their families to experience various aspects of the secondary school program and to tour the school together, perhaps in the more social atmosphere of an open day
- arranging for incoming students to attend performances of secondary school drama and music productions, art shows, athletic events and so on
- arranging for incoming students to experience 'taster' lessons, to help them gain familiarity with some of the secondary teachers and some of the specialist secondary facilities, such as the gym, industrial arts rooms and art rooms
- hosting a forum, possibly at each main feeder primary school, which provides Year 6 students with an opportunity to have their questions about secondary schooling answered
- preparing newsletters or establishing a web site dedicated to providing information to incoming students, including information for groups with special interests such as choir, debating, band, sport and creative arts. The web site could also contain an interactive forum for questions and answers about the secondary school, plus links to each primary school's web site
- developing a 'Year 7 handbook' as a guide for incoming students
- distributing a Year 7 newsletter which parents and caregivers begin to receive when students are in Year 6 and which continues throughout Year 7. It could include topics of special concern for 'transitioning' students and parents
- organising a picnic day (for example, for Year 6 students and parents, or for Year 6 students and selected secondary students such as peer support leaders or Year 7 mentors), which incorporates opportunities for developing social skills, fostering student/teacher and students/student relationships and helping students to develop responsibility, leadership skills and independent living skills
- conducting familiarisation visits, special meetings and other activities for students at risk
- conducting familiarisation visits, special meetings and other activities for students with disabilities or learning assistance needs

- arranging for ex-students to visit their old primary school to tell Year 6 students of their positive and interesting experiences at secondary school
- assigning 'buddies' to incoming Year 7 students. These could be more senior students when Year 7 first begin secondary school, but could be other Year 7 students when new Year 7 students enrol later in the year
- establishing a peer support program, with new Year 7 students and Year 10 or 11 students forming small teams that meet regularly for discussion, problem-solving and social activities
- establishing pen pal (or e-pal) relationships among primary and secondary students with common interests such as band, student council, sports and other groups common to both schools. Students should be encouraged to ask questions about these programs and secondary school in general
- extending the amount of student movement that occurs in primary schools, by changing the school's organisational structure so that students in Years 5 and 6 have experience of a timetable that mimics secondary school organisation
- establishing peer tutoring groups in Years 4, 5 or 6, where secondary students provide tutoring or coaching for primary school students in areas such as literacy, numeracy, creative arts, performing arts, computing and sport
- establishing peer tutoring groups in Year 7 or 8 in areas such as literacy, numeracy, computing and sport
- arranging for secondary school teachers to exchange places with Year 6 teachers for a set time, allowing students to become acquainted with their future teachers and learn about the courses and expectations for secondary school, and enabling teachers to become familiar with incoming students, their abilities and needs
- arranging for students from the secondary school and its feeder primary schools to work on a group project (either face-to-face or through the internet) that not only enhances their learning but also promotes personal confidence and social interaction.

## Curriculum

Examples of curriculum activities within the NSW context include:

- establishing joint primary–secondary school curriculum teams within specific KLAs that meet regularly to discuss curriculum planning, implementation and evaluation for K to Year 12
- developing joint primary–secondary school KLA curriculum framework statements for Years 5 to 8 or Years 6 to 7 to ensure curriculum continuity from primary to secondary school in critical curriculum areas
- organising joint primary–secondary meetings of teachers to discuss syllabuses and curriculum continuity within specific KLAs
- organising joint primary–secondary meetings of teachers to share teaching programs and teaching units
- arranging for secondary school teachers to attend stage curriculum meetings in the primary school
- arranging for primary school teachers to attend faculty meetings in the secondary school
- arranging joint primary–secondary school development days to discuss curriculum and assessment issues for Years 5 to 8 or K to Year 12
- organising KLA-specific meetings of teachers to share assessment information and examples of student work
- arranging for individual or teams of teachers to visit other schools where successful programs are in place to support continuity of curriculum from Years 6 to 7, Years 5 to 8 or K to Year 12
- establishing class structures within both primary schools and secondary schools that enable students to work at their appropriate stage level
- establishing a curriculum structure in Year 7 and Year 8 where an integrated curriculum of core subjects is taught by a small team of teachers, supported by specialist teachers who teach specialist subjects, for example, TAS
- conducting enrichment lessons for primary students using specialist facilities located within the secondary school, such as art rooms, science laboratories, kitchens, drama rooms and industrial arts workshops
- investigating opportunities for shared acceleration programs, gifted and talented programs and peer tutoring programs between primary and secondary schools
- investigating opportunities to develop curriculum projects or bridging units of work that students start towards the end of Year 6 and finish early in Year 7
- arranging for students from both primary and secondary schools to participate in collaborative Internet projects related to curriculum
- mounting joint productions such as school choirs, drama groups, art displays and major work displays
- developing a variety of Year 7 teaching units based around small groups, to take account of differences in students' prior learning and their varying experiences in primary classrooms.

## Pedagogy

Examples of pedagogy activities within the NSW context include:

- organising joint primary–secondary meetings of teachers over an extended period of time to develop a shared set of beliefs about quality learning so that students entering the secondary school then experience a consistent approach to pedagogy in the middle years
- organising joint primary–secondary school development days to explore the Quality Teaching discussion paper as it relates to student transition
- organising joint primary–secondary meetings of teachers to discuss KLA-specific aspects of the Quality Teaching discussion paper and how it relates to particular syllabuses, assessment practices and student learning
- organising joint primary–secondary meetings of teachers to use the Quality Teaching support materials to code a variety of lessons from the DVD or video. Teachers could jointly discuss how these lessons might be enhanced. Assessment tasks, student responses and other samples of student work could also be analysed and discussed
- organising lesson observations and pedagogy dialogue for individuals or teams of secondary school teachers in local primary schools, and vice versa
- organising teacher exchanges between the local primary school and the local secondary school
- arranging for individuals or teams of teachers to visit schools that are implementing innovative middle school pedagogy
- reducing the number of teachers for each Year 7 class by avoiding split classes in Year 7 and having teachers willing to teach two or more subjects, for example, English/HSIE or maths/science
- establishing teams of teachers for Year 7 and Year 8 classes and providing opportunities for them to meet regularly to discuss teaching, learning and their students through, for example, building team meetings and teacher relief into the school timetable
- establishing teams of teachers for Year 7 and Year 8 where a small team of teachers is responsible for a specific group of students in both the curriculum and welfare sense
- establishing teams of students in Year 7 and Year 8 (and onwards) that stay together, work together and learn together in each and every subject area for the whole year
- providing sustained, ongoing professional learning for all secondary school teachers in cooperative learning and group teaching techniques for use in junior secondary classrooms
- encouraging team teaching in junior secondary schooling that focuses on cooperative learning techniques, supported by a range of professional learning opportunities to enhance teachers' skills
- tracking student academic achievement from Years 5 to 8 as part of a research project to measure the impact of transition on learning and motivation
- coordinating primary and secondary teachers who jointly develop learning modules to be delivered across the end of Year 6 and the beginning of Year 7.

## Management of learning

Examples of management of learning activities within the NSW context include:

- creating 'home room' classes for all Year 7 students, which meet on a regular basis and address issues related to transition, welfare, academic expectations and progress and so on, under the guidance of specially selected or trained teachers
- establishing teams of teachers for classes in Years 7 and 8 and providing these teams with time to meet for planning and programming. For example, teams may discuss ways for individual students to develop skills in management of learning. In this way, students are better known, better monitored and better supported by a team of teachers
- assigning a group of incoming Year 7 students to an adult adviser or mentor who assists students with transition and attends to each student's academic progress and social adjustment
- providing academic support activities for students in Years 7 and 8, using teachers, adult volunteers and older students as tutors
- establishing peer tutoring groups for students in Years 7 and 8, supported by training for the peer tutors in aspects of student learning
- organising a half or full day session each semester, especially for students in Years 5 to 8, focused on developing study skills, goal setting, planning, decision making, problem-solving, thinking skills etc
- organising parent evenings focused on raising awareness about student learning and study skills
- establishing a section of the school's web site that focuses specifically on middle school issues associated with learning, study skills, homework and exam techniques
- organising sustained professional learning for teachers on how they can effectively lead students to:
  - identify aspects of their own learning and how they learn
  - establish and apply key skills including planning, prioritising, problem-solving and decision making
  - identify how processes of application and reflection can enhance their own learning about how to learn.